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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused April 7 news coverage on the fraud scandals involving several high-ranking Taiwan military officials; on the year-end city mayors' and country magistrates' elections; on a Taiwan fishing boat which was hijacked by Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean Monday; and on the powerful earthquake that rocked Italy Monday.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, several editorial pieces centered on the recently-concluded G-20 summit in London and its connection to U.S.-China-Taiwan relations. An editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" said that China has seized the opportunity of the G-20 to demanding that other countries give political payback by offering their confirmation of China's stance on the Taiwan and Tibetan issues. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said that a worrying development for Taiwan was "Washington's move toward the creation of a 'G2' with China, an exclusive US-China relationship that would go well beyond cooperation on economic matters and enter the strategic sphere." A separate "Taipei Times" op-ed piece, written by a U.S. professor of strategy at the Naval War College in Rhode Island, discussed the recent standoff between U.S. survey ships and Chinese vessels in the South China Sea. The article urged the United States to "renew its political commitment to Asia while bolstering its naval posture." An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" discussed the meeting between U.S. President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao on the margins of the G-20 meeting. The article concluded that "the Obama administration should constantly keep in mind the importance of upholding Taiwan's democratic process in cross-strait relations and should ... remind international society that the effective promotion of democracy and human rights in China itself must remain essential elements in any 'positive, cooperative and comprehensive' relations with an authoritarian and expansionist PRC." End summary.

### ¶3. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "How Can the [Taiwan] People Sit back and Watch the Ma Administration Push Taiwan's Future into the Graveyard?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] editorialized (4/7):

"The G-20 summit in London ended last week, but its impact and implications on Taiwan have just started to show. China seized a tough moment when the financial tsunami that has broken out in the United States is causing economic recession in the world, and it attempted with all it has to manage the 'rise of its position' [in the international community] following its economic rise. [China's attempt] was reflected in Hu Jintao's strong need to establish his achievements in history -- namely, to assure that [he] will push forward 'unification' [with Taiwan,] which has never been easy to achieve by any [Chinese] leader since the founding of the Chinese Communist government. The issue regarding Taiwan's sovereignty, as a result, has borne the first brunt and become a target that [China] stares at maliciously and covetously. ...

"On the surface, the G-20 meeting concluded with various economic stimulus plans of international cooperation as its major accomplishment to save the global crisis. But behind it, China conveniently took advantage of such a group meeting among big nations to demand political payback from other countries in a high-profile manner. In his meeting with Hu, [U.S. President Barack] Obama, a 'freshman' in the international community, directly encountered the 'confirmation' of [China's stance on] the Taiwan and Tibetan issues. ... Such signals, which maliciously encroach on the sovereignty of Taiwan or the Republic of China, were sent many days ago. Yet our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as if in a completely vegetative state, was totally unprepared and presented zero contingency planning when faced with consistently severe interpellation from both ruling party and opposition legislators yesterday. ... The fact that the [Ma] regime is at its wit's end toward the drifting state of Taiwan as a nation is in reality akin to murdering the 'Republic of China'. It does not matter much if Ma Ying-jeou were 'wiped out' by Hu Jintao, but how can numerous Taiwan people sit back and watch Ma's incapability to command [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], thereby sending our nation's future into the graveyard?"

#### B) "Can Taiwan Survive Historical Forces?"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/7):

"... Another worrying development - again something that is well beyond the ability of Taiwanese to control - is Washington's move toward the creation of a 'G2' with China, an exclusive US-China relationship that would go well beyond cooperation on economic matters and enter the strategic sphere. Should this come into being,

the forces of history could very well engulf Taiwan. Already, major allies of the US in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Japan and India, have voiced concern at the emergence of a "G2," which they perceive as a plot by Beijing to undermine their influence in the region. Western observers, including Dennis Wilder, a visiting fellow at the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institution, have been receptive to those fears and highlighted the downsides.

"'We [the US] have far more in common with our allies and the region's democracies than with China,' Wilder wrote in the Washington Post last week. And yet, not once did Wilder, a former senior director for East Asian affairs at the National Security Council, mention Taiwan. This is a telling omission. If giants like Japan and India risk being undermined by a US-China 'G2,' one can only wonder what the arrangement entails for the future of this country. As the saying goes, when elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers. In a time when the giants of this world have their eyes fixed on the global economy and increasingly see China as an indispensable ally, small states are likely to be pushed around - and perhaps sacrificed. Unless Taiwan starts making noise now, it could very well become the first 'inevitable' democratic casualty of the force of history that is the global financial crisis."

#### C) "The PLA Navy Sails the South China Sea"

James Holmes, associate professor of strategy at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (4/7):

"US leaders should not be surprised at China's vehemence toward US maritime operations in the South China Sea. Nor is this merely a passing phase in China's rise. As the Chinese economy grows more and more dependent on seaborne commerce passing through the Strait of Malacca and as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy extends its seaward reach, Beijing will take an increasingly forceful approach to Southeast Asian affairs. By no means is armed conflict inevitable, but Washington should expect Beijing to mount a persistent challenge. It may even try to recast the US-led maritime order in Asia to suit Chinese preferences. Stronger powers tend to push for legal interpretations favorable to themselves, and they tend to get their way. Redefining its offshore "exclusive economic zone," or EEZ, as sovereign waters would let China forbid many foreign naval activities in maritime Southeast Asia.

"Beijing's ambitions are no secret. Chinese law claims virtually the whole South China Sea as territorial waters. Recent harassment by Chinese vessels of two US survey ships operating in international waters - but within China's EEZ, south of Hainan Province - is probably just the start of Sino-US wrangling over maritime law. If Beijing's view wins out, the South China Sea will in effect become a Chinese lake, especially as the PLA Navy increases its capacity to put steel behind China's maritime territorial claims. ... The US must renew its political commitment to Asia while bolstering its naval posture. Otherwise, Washington will abdicate its maritime leadership."

D) "What Obama-Hu Meet Means for Taiwan"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (4/7):

"The first meeting between United States President Barack Obama and People's Republic of China State Chairman and ruling Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Hu Jintao on the sidelines of the 'Group of 20 countries' summit held in London last week sent a worrying message to Taiwan and other regional U.S. allies. ... After all, U.S. allies in Asia are deeply concerned that Washington's search for a solution to its worst postwar economic downturn may induce the Obama administration to go beyond expanded strategic economic and political dialogues with the PRC and develop a full-blown strategic partnership and could cause a 'China first' policy to outweigh the US's long-term 'Asian policy.' While the result may be short of the feared 'G2,' the Obama administration does seem to have elevated the economy into the main axis of its 'multi-track' foreign policy. Naturally, our main concern is the implications of these trends for Taiwan. The Obama administration has been supportive of the cross-strait "reconciliation" pursued by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) administration of President Ma Ying-jeou during the past 10 months, which seem to accord with Washington's primary concerns with 'peace and stability.' ...

The U.S. may choose not to interfere with the efforts of the Ma administration to promote 'reconciliation' under a 'one-China framework' supposedly based on the so-called 'Consensus of 1992,' so long as the process is 'peaceful.' However, it remains uncertain how Obama and his Democratic administration would react if such a 'reconciliation' process was 'undemocratic' and turned into a

'gradual unification' arranged under the table through the secretive KMT-CCP dialogue, beyond the reach of Taiwan's democratic mechanisms. Moreover, Hu's remarks on Taiwan undermined the theoretical underpinning of Ma's policy by effectively refuting the KMT administration's claim that Beijing was flexible on its 'one China principle,' which insists that Taiwan is part of the PRC. ...

"Moreover, the fact that the PRC has made no concessions or reductions of its military threat to Taiwan despite Ma's olive branches suggests that uncertainties and possible danger of conflict are still embedded in cross-strait relations. Hence, the Obama administration should constantly keep in mind the importance of upholding Taiwan's democratic process in cross-strait relations and should itself remind international society that the effective promotion of democracy and human rights in China itself must remain essential elements in any 'positive, cooperative and comprehensive' relations with an authoritarian and expansionist PRC."

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